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VIA WIRELESS
Novelized by Thompson Buchanan From the Successful Play of the Same Name
By WINCHELL SMITH, FREDERIC THOMPSON and PAUL ARMSTRONG
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(Continued.)
"Marsh will take care of me," gasped O'Leary. "Hurry! Do as I told you." Reluctantly Lucy ran out of the office as the head draughtsman came over to the injured man.
"What's happened, O'Leary?" The assistant foreman was almost too weak from the shock and loss of blood to reply, but he managed to gasp out faintly:
"Smith cracked me with a hammer when I wasn't looking. He's fighting drunk. Mr. Marsh, and ruining the Sommers gun."
Marsh, experienced about the works, was examining O'Leary's wounded head with almost professional skill.
"You've got a bad rap, boy. We must rush you to the doctor."
He stepped to the door leading into the works and yelled for two men, then came back to do what he could. Pinckney had almost at the same moment returned from his private office.
"What's this?" he exclaimed as he saw the bloody O'Leary half lying across an office table.
The workman, injured though he was, still held to his grim determination to get justice for Sommers. At Pinckney's question the half raised himself on the table.
"It's Smith, sir," he said to the general manager. "He's leaving that gun too long in the furnace. I kicked, and he hit me when my back was turned. I'll fix him."
Pinckney looked at the bloody man coldly.
"You ought to have more sense than to kick," he said. "Smith's in charge of that job. He's responsible. It's none of your business. You ought to have kept your head shut."
O'Leary stared at the manager, too amazed to retort. He was still half dazed from the terrific blow he had received or his suspicions would have been immediately aroused. The two men had entered from the works and stood ready. They knew just what to do.
"Here," ordered Pinckney, "take this fellow across to the doctor quick. Tell him it's a work case."
The two men seized O'Leary, picked him up in their arms and hurried with him out of the office.
Marsh turned to the general manager.
"We've got to stop this, Mr. Pinckney," he exclaimed. "Smith is fighting drunk."
Pinckney nodded carelessly.
"Oh, yes, I understand, but I'll see to Smith. There's something more important on now. I've just got a wire from my agent in Washington."
"About my gun?" asked Marsh anxiously.
"About the Rhinestrom gun," came Pinckney's cold correction.
The head draughtsman nodded acquiescence.
"Yes, that's what I mean," he agreed. Pinckney took a telegram out of his pocket.
"Well, there's all sorts of trouble in Washington," he explained. "Tomorrow they'll notify us not to begin on the Rhinestrom order until the Sommers gun is tested."
"What of that?" asked Marsh blankly. "It only means a slight delay."
Pinckney made an impatient gesture. "Slight delay, nothing! Haven't you sense enough to see it's a game of this toy sailor, Sommers? They'll countermand the order for our gun after they test his just as sure as fate."
Marsh dropped into a chair dejectedly.
"Just my luck," he exclaimed in distress. "That's the end of my royalty. I might have known. It always happens that way with me. I never have any luck."
Pinckney stood looking, a sneering smile on his face.
"That's it," he said contemptuously. "Lay down. That's the reason your luck is always bad and always will be bad. A quitter can't have any luck. How do you expect to have anything if you drop at the first ditch?"
The inventor looked up, puzzled.
"What can I do?" he asked.
Pinckney smiled pityingly on him.
"What can you do? Haven't you sense enough to guess? Here!" he stepped closer to the inventor to speak in a lower, firmer tone—"this dirty, tricky sailor has got the best of us in Washington, but with Smith drunk I guess we've got the best of him here."
Marsh looked up, startled, amazed. Some slight hint of what Pinckney intended began to dawn on him.
"What do you mean?" he asked slowly in an almost dazed tone.
The general manager looked at him sharply.
"What time did you say Sommers would get here?"
"One-thirty," replied Marsh.
Pinckney's laugh was rich with confident relief.
"Well, there's lots of time. It isn't 12 yet," he chuckled.
On Marsh's face had come an expression of horror. He knew now what the general manager intended to do. It made him sick to think of it, for Marsh was honest at heart. Only he was an inventor. He loved his work. It was his chance of a lifetime. And, then, he was weak.
"You mean you will ruin his gun?" he half whispered faintly.
The brutal laugh of the other man was answer enough.
"Shut up!" he sneered. "Don't talk as if it was murder. If you're going to get on in this world, Marsh, you must learn there's as much in blocking the other fellow's game as there is in playing your own."
His latent sense of honesty made one last sickening revolt as Marsh started up from his chair, exclaiming wildly:
"It's awful! I won't be a party to any such thing as that, Mr. Pinckney." With all his superior physical and mental strength Pinckney seized the

get what O'Leary got. That's what'll be coming to him."
Pinckney shook his head.
"No, that won't do, Smith," he commanded sharply.
Out in the works where he was practically boss the foreman could not be so easily controlled.
"Oh, it won't do, won't it?" he yelled. "I'll show you whether it'll do or not."
He doubled up one of his big fists, shaking it menacingly. And now Pinckney let him rage without check.
A daring idea had come to the desperate schemer. Perhaps, after all, if Smith attacked Sommers it might not be so bad. It would be up to Smith. He would suffer; no one else. At any rate, Sommers must not see that gun go into the tempering bath. Pinckney decided to irritate his drunken foreman a little more.
"Better be careful, Smith. He's in a position to make trouble for us all. He's an officer of the navy, you know; has a right to inspect the work. We've got to treat him well. Besides, this Sommers is a pretty bad fighter himself. He's got an idea he can lick anybody around these works."
That was enough. Smith's fury was keyed to the fighting stage now. It only needed the presence of Sommers and a little provocation to start real trouble.
"Think he's a fighter, does he?" he roared. "Let him come in here—I'll show him who's a fighter. I don't have to treat him well. I don't have to treat you well, Pinckney. I don't have to treat anybody well. I'm independent, I am. I don't crawl for nobody."
"Smith, you're drunk," declared the general manager. "You're drunk or you wouldn't talk that way."
"I know I'm drunk," roared the foreman. "But I'm the best man in the outfit, drunk or sober. Just let that navy duck show up."
Inside Pinckney was smiling, well pleased, but he kept a straight, stern face.
"I know you're the best man, Smith," he confessed. "But why do you want to fight with me?"
"Who's fighting with you?" blustered the bully. "There wouldn't be enough of you to carry away if I was fighting with you."
Pinckney laughed powerfully.
"All right," he said. "Now, remember, Sommers must not see that gun come out of the furnace. He's sore on us, and he'll make a bad report on the job if he gets a chance. You know what would happen to you then."
"He tried to get my job," roared the foreman. "Try to take an honest man's living away from him? I'll show him."
He turned to the workman near the furnace, yelling, "Here, take that Sommers gun."
Pinckney caught the foreman by the arm.
"Wait a minute, wait, Smith," he commanded. "Here's Sommers now." The naval lieutenant was coming down the long furnace room, shielding his eyes from the terrific heat and glare of the furnaces as he passed. Smith lurched up to meet him just as he stepped in front of the furnace which held the Sommers gun. One quick look assured the navy man of the foreman's condition.
"How soon do you take the gun out, Smith?" he asked.
The foreman lurched up, thrusting his face close to the officer's.
"None of your business," he retorted. "I take it out when I get good and ready. Maybe at one time, and then again it may be another."
The answer was enough. Every muscle in Sommers' powerful frame set for action. Already he had the foreman's protruding jaw measured for his right hand, and Pinckney's voice checked him.
"I say, Sommers, come here, please, will you?"
The naval man turned without a word and walked over to the general manager.
"Perhaps you can explain this, Mr. Pinckney?" he demanded sternly.
Pinckney smiled apologetically.
"I hope you won't mind Smith. You can see he's been drinking."
The officer's eyes narrowed. The fighting look was still on his face.
"And that's the kind of a man you allow to be in charge of important work?" he demanded.
Pinckney was still apologetic.
"It doesn't often happen, I'm glad to say," he explained. "But Smith is a



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